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The situation in the Middle East

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Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 4 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to my note dated 19 February 2002, I have the honour to bring to your attention various statements made by your Personal Representative, Staffan de Mistura, and quoted by Lebanese media officials, following Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace on several occasions during the year 2001. These statements, as is evidently indicated, draw attention to the gravity of the situation in the area and call on Israel to halt such violations.

14 October 2001

The United Nations calls for a halt to Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace.

Radio Orient: In a statement issued yesterday, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, denounced Israel's continued violations of Lebanese airspace and called for a halt to such actions, which can "potentially aggravate" tension in the region.

Staffan de Mistura "noted with concern that five Israeli overflights took place across the Blue Line on 10 October", according to a United Nations statement. "Sonic booms also were heard over southern Lebanon", he said, adding that "such violations of the Blue Line and Lebanese airspace can potentially aggravate an already tense situation".

According to the statement, Mr. Mistura "reiterates his call upon Israeli authorities to cease these violations and fully respect the Blue Line".

15 October 2001

A new approach on Israeli violations of the Blue Line.

An Nahar: "In something that seemed like a new start by the United Nations on the Israeli violations of the Blue Line, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, issued another statement, the second in two days, calling on Israel to put an end to the air violations. The statement said 'the United Nations had pointed out many times, including in reports to the Security Council, the Israeli violations of the Blue Line'. The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General noted with worry that five Israeli air violations took place on 11 October. The

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Personal Representative of the Secretary-General reiterates his call to the Israeli authorities to put an end to these violations and to respect the Blue Line fully."

As Safir: In a new style, the United Nations is "openly deploring" the Israeli violations of the Blue Line in the air, on the ground and at sea.

22 October 2001

The United Nations again calls on Israel to stop violating Lebanese airspace.

Manar TV: "The United Nations Information Centre in Beirut said the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General regrets repeated Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace despite several United Nations immediate demands to stop such violations.

"A statement said the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, noted with concern that five Israeli warplanes carried out four violations of the demarcation Blue Line starting at 2 o'clock on Friday afternoon. Israeli jets broke the sound barrier over the capital, Beirut, and some areas in the south.

"The statement concluded that such violations could threaten to heighten an already tense situation, adding that once again, Mr. de Mistura calls on Israel's authorities to stop such violations and fully respect the Blue Line."

Future TV said that warplanes drew fire from Hizbullah. Three Israeli warplanes staged mock air raids over Tyre causing panic among residents.

29 October 2001

Mr. de Mistura calls on Israel to stop its violations of the Blue Line.

As Safir: "The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, expressed his concern over an Israeli helicopter violating the Blue Line last Saturday and demanded the Israeli authorities to stop it."

31 October 2001

The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General: even one violation may contribute negatively.

The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, has noted with concern that an Israeli military jet violated the Blue Line on 29 October 2001. The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General is of the belief that even one such violation may contribute negatively to the already tense situation. In this regard, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General reiterates his call upon the Israeli authorities to halt such air violations and to fully respect the Blue Line, a statement issued by the United Nations Information Centre said.

1 November 2001

The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General protests.

An Nahar: "The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, again accused Israel of violating the Blue Line on Tuesday with a jet. He appealed to the Israeli authorities to put an end to these air violations."

2 November 2001

Israeli warplanes violate Lebanon's airspace.

Manar TV: "Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, flying over Tyre and Sidon and causing panic (?) among residents. Three fighter-bombers swooped over Tyre at low altitude (?) and then headed northward to fly low over Sidon. The Lebanese Army announced that between 1000 and 1030, Israeli warplanes violated the Lebanese airspace."

Manar TV said, "Israeli jets flying over Tyre made drivers panic and abandon (?) their vehicles to seek shelter in nearby buildings." The TV said "the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, 'slammed' the Israeli act and described it as a violation of the Blue Line".

An Nahar headlined: Despite the calls of de Mistura, the Israeli jets violated the Lebanese airspace until Shekka.

Monday, 5 November 2001

News summary for staff of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Mr. de Mistura counted eight violations.

As Safir: A new statement issued on Friday by the United Nations Information Centre, on behalf of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, counted eight Israeli air violations of the Blue Line on Thursday and Friday. The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, noted with concern that the Israeli air violations of the Blue Line and the Lebanese airspace were still ongoing until 4 o'clock Friday afternoon despite the repeated United Nations demands to put an end to them.

14 November 2001

Manar TV: "Israeli enemy jets caused supersonic booms over Beirut and Tripoli in the latest violations of Lebanon's airspace that have drawn strong criticism from the United Nations. In a statement, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, noted with extreme concern that Israeli jets had violated Lebanon's airspace and called for an immediate halt to such violations."

15 November 2001

The Daily Star: "Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace for the second straight day on Wednesday, drawing anti-aircraft fire from Hizbullah. Sonic booms were heard across the Bekaa Valley and in Beirut, as Staffan de Mistura, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, expressed his 'deepest concern' over what he said could exacerbate an already tense situation."

I kindly ask that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sélim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative